

February 8, 2021

Dear Chair Robin Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee:

As a faith leader and a licensed professional counselor who has served a number of communities in North Dakota, I urge you to vote DO PASS on HB 1488, which would establish a Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Commission.

This important bill would support a number of crucial practices toward inter-cultural healing, rooted in age-old spiritual realities: we are transformed by telling the truth, by being in genuine witness to it, and by creating structures where both processes become possible. This bill would do all of this, honoring history from Indigenous peoples' perspectives and providing descendants of settlers with an opportunity to learn and respect this history. What's more, this bill would make all of this happen through the leadership and guidance of Indigenous peoples and practices, addressing historical trauma in culturally relevant ways.

Communities in Minnesota, South Africa, and around the world have found that such Commissions restore trust and wellbeing across cultures in profound ways. I hope you will give today's testimony your fullest consideration and attention, preparing the way in today's hearing for the work yet to come.

Sincerely,

Rev. Karen I Van Fossan  
Fargo-Moorhead Unitarian Universalist Church  
121 9<sup>th</sup> St. S.  
Fargo, ND 58103